

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of producing digital image products in a photofinishing lab, the photofinishing lab having a plurality of image obtaining devices for obtaining a plurality of digital images from multiple customer orders, a plurality of digital output devices for providing a plurality of digital image products based on the obtained digital images, and a central processing unit, the method comprising the steps of:

associating each obtained digital image with identification data;
sending each of said obtained digital images and their associated identification data to the central processing unit, the central processing unit analyzing each of the obtained digital images and comparing said analyzed obtained digital images with reference digital image data representative of an optimum image to create an optimized image, said central processing unit further creating batches of digital images from the multiple customer orders, the images in each batch having similar identification data, such that a batch of images may include images from different customer orders, said central processing unit further determining an output sequence of each of said obtained digital images to said output devices based on at least the associated identification data;

providing a digital image product based on the obtained digital image at said digital output device; and

combining the digital image product from the output devices with a related original order from said original orders using the associated identification data.

2. (original) A method according to claim 1, comprising the further step of:

manipulating said analyzed obtained digital images based on said reference digital image data.

3. (currently amended) A method of producing digital image products in a photofinishing lab, the photofinishing lab having a plurality of image obtaining devices for obtaining a plurality of digital images from multiple customer orders, a plurality of digital output devices for providing a plurality of digital image products based on the obtained digital images, and a central processing unit, the method comprising the steps of:

associating each obtained digital image with identification data; sending each of said obtained digital images and their associated identification data to the central processing unit, the central processing unit analyzing each of the obtained digital images and comparing said analyzed obtained digital images with reference digital image data representative of an optimum image to create an optimized image, said central processing unit further creating batches of digital images from the multiple customer orders, the images in each batch having similar identification data, such that a batch of images may include images from different customer orders, said central processing unit further determining an output sequence of each of said obtained digital images to said output devices based on at least the associated identification data;

providing a digital image product based on the obtained digital image at said digital output device; and

combining the digital image product from the output devices with a related original order from said original orders using the associated identification data;

wherein said identification data is product/service data indicative of a type of digital image product for the digital output image, such that the central processing unit modifies the obtained digital images in accordance with the product/service data and the output device to which the obtained digital image is to be sent.

4. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said identification data is at least source data indicative of a source of said obtained digital image.

5. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said identification data is at least a unique consumer/retailer identifier.

6. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said identification data is at least one of a product/service data, a source data and a unique consumer/retailer identifier.

7. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said identification data is magnetic data written on film.

8. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said digital output device is at least one of a thermal printer, an inkjet printer, a laser printer or a digital silver halide printer.

9. (original) A method according to claim 1, comprising the further steps of:

 sending prestored digital images to said central processing unit;
 and

 combining selected ones of said obtained digital images and said prestored digital images based on said identification data.

10. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said original order comprises digital image data obtained from scanned film.

11. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said original order comprises digital image data obtained from physical media

12. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said original order comprises digital image data electronically sent to said photofinishing lab.

13. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said original order comprises digital image data obtained from a scanned print.

14. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said original order is generated from a consumer/retailer.

15. (currently amended) A photofinishing lab for producing digital image products, the photofinishing lab comprising:

a plurality of image obtaining devices for obtaining digital images from multiple customer orders;

a plurality of image output devices for providing digital image products based on said obtained digital images, each of the obtained digital images being associated with identification data;

a central processing unit which receives said obtained digital images and the associated identification data, said central processing unit being adapted to analyze the obtained digital images and compare each of said obtained digital images with reference image data representative of an optimum image to create an optimized image, said central processing unit being further adapted to create batches of digital images from the multiple customer orders, the digital images in each batch having similar identification data such that a batch of digital images may include digital images from different customer orders, said central processing unit being further adapted to determine an output sequence for each of said obtained digital images to said image output devices based on at least the associated identification data; and

a finishing arrangement which is adapted to combine the digital image products from said image output devices with a related original order from said original orders using the associated identification data.

16. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said identification data is product/service data indicative of a type of digital image product for the digital output image, such that the central processing unit modifies the obtained digital images in accordance with the product/service data and the output device to which the obtained digital image is to be sent.

17. (previously presented) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said identification data is at least source data indicative of a source of said obtained digital image.

18. (previously presented) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said identification data is at least a unique consumer/retailer identifier.

19. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said identification data is at least one of a product /service data, a source data and a unique consumer/retailer identifier.

20. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said identification data is magnetic data written on film.

21. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, further comprising a second image data input source which comprises prestored digital images, said central processing unit being adapted to receive said prestored digital images and combine selected ones of said prestored digital images and said obtained digital images based on said identification data.

22. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said original orders comprise digital image data obtained from scanned film.

23. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said original orders comprise digital image data obtained from physical media.

24. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said original orders comprise digital image data electronically sent to said photofinishing lab.

25. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said original orders comprise digital image data obtained from a scanned print.

26. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said digital output device is at least one of a thermal printer, an inkjet printer, a laser printer, or a digital silver halide printer.

27. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said central processing unit is further adapted to manipulate said analyzed obtained digital images based on said reference digital image data.

28. (original) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said original order is generated from a consumer/retailer.

29. (currently amended) A photofinishing method for managing workflow in a photofinishing lab, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving images at the photofinishing lab, said images being received from multiple customer orders;

associating each image with identification data;

sending each image and its associated identification data to a processing unit, the processing unit analyzing said image with reference to image data representative of an optimum image to provide for an optimized image, and creating batches of digital images from said multiple customer orders, the images in each batch having similar identification data, such that a batch of images may include images from different customer orders, said processing unit further determining an output sequence of each of said images to output devices based on at least the associated identification data;

providing an image product based on the image at an output device of said output devices which is appropriate for the image product; and

combining the image product from the output device with a related original order from said original orders using the associated identification data.

30. (original) A method according to claim 29, wherein the output device is at least one of an optical printer, a thermal printer, an inkjet printer, a laser printer or a digital silver halide printer.

31. (original) A method according to claim 29, comprising the further step of manipulating said analyzed obtained image based on said reference image data.

32. (original) A method according to claim 29, wherein said original order is generated from a consumer/retailer.

33. (previously presented) A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable storage medium having a computer program thereon which when loaded into a computer causes the computer to manage workflow in a photofinishing lab by performing the following steps:

associating images received at the photofinishing lab with identification data, the images being received from multiple customer orders;

sending each image and its associated identification data to a processing unit, the processing unit creating batches of digital images from said multiple customer orders, the images in each batch having similar identification data, such that a batch of images may include images from different customer orders, said processing unit further determining an output sequence of each of said images to output devices based on at least the associated identification data;

providing an image product based on the image at an output device of said output devices which is appropriate for the image product; and

combining the image product from the output device with a related original order from said original orders using the associated identification data;

wherein said identification data is product/service data indicative of a type of image product for the image, such that the images are modified in accordance with the product/service data and the output device to which the image is to be sent.

Claims 34. - 37 (canceled)

38. (currently amended) A digital photofinishing arrangement comprising:

a plurality of output devices, each of said output devices being adapted to produce a different output image product;

a plurality of image obtaining devices for obtaining images from multiple customer orders, at least one of said image obtaining devices being adapted to convert non-digital images of the obtained images into a digital format so as to place all of the obtained images in a common digital format; and

a processing unit which is adapted to create a virtual batch of said obtained images for forwarding to said plurality of output devices, said virtual batch including images from different customer orders and being created based on at least a time necessary to complete the image products, so as to compile a sequence of completion of said output image products that permits efficient use of said output devices;

wherein said processing unit is further adapted to analyze each of said obtained images for image correction based on at least reference image data to provide for an optimized image.

39. (canceled)

40. (currently amended) A photofinishing method comprising the steps of:

receiving images from multiple customer orders at a photofinishing lab;

converting non-digital images of said received images into a digital format, such that all of the images received at said photofinishing lab are in a common digital format;

creating a virtual batch of said received images based on at least a time necessary to complete output image products at any of a plurality of output devices, said virtual batch comprising images from different customer orders, each of said output image products being related to an associated received image from said received images, such that a sequence of completion of the output image products that permits efficient use of the output devices is compiled; and

comparing said received images to reference image data representative of an optimum image and manipulating said received images based on said reference image data to provide for an optimized image.

Claims 41-54 (canceled)